

Frederick County Sustainability Commission

Meeting Minutes

3rd Floor Meeting Room, Winchester Hall, 12 E. Church Street, Frederick, MD

August 12, 2009

3:00 pm

Present: Don Briggs, Steve Chafitz, Annmarie Creamer, Sally Fulmer, Lisa Gaver, Mark Lancaster, Margie Lance; Rich Maranto, Lisa Orr, Winifred Palmer, Kim Roberts, and Fred Ugast; Hilari Varnadore, staff

Others present: Leah Jones

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Hilari Varnadore called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm. She asked commissioners to share something that they like about this time of year.

2. Administrative Items

Meeting Minutes: Mr. Briggs asked staff to add that he teaches a green appraisal course. Ms. Varnadore found a typo under #5, Commission's role. Mr. Ugast made a motion to accept the minutes with the two corrections. Ms. Lance seconded. All voted in favor of accepting the meeting minutes.

Meeting date/time: The commission accepted the 3rd Wednesday at 3:00 pm in the 3rd floor meeting room of Winchester Hall for their regular meeting date and time.

Bylaws: Ms. Varnadore stated that she and Fayne Lebherz were working on a draft set of bylaws for review based on the recently adopted Affordable Housing Council bylaws. Mr. Ugast, Ms. Lance, and Ms. Orr volunteered to review the bylaw draft and prepare a draft for discussion at the commission's September meeting.

Upcoming Events: The group decided it was too early to attend events like In the Streets since there were no marketing materials, mission or message that the group was ready to promote. Ms. Varnadore mentioned that the Frederick Fair would have representation from the Sustainability and Recycling offices. Mr. Maranto updated the group on the October Solar Tour, scheduled for the 3rd and 4th. He stated that he would like to have a local solar tour next year; the event he is involved in is a regional DC area tour. Ms. Lance stated that it would be nice to have Sustainability Commission nametags for use at future events.

Open Meetings Act: Ms. Varnadore mentioned that there was information on the Open Meetings Act in their packets. A staff member had inquired about the Google Groups page in reference to the OMA. Ms. Varnadore requested advice from County Attorney Linda Thall on the issue; she responded that since the Google Groups page did not support live chatting, there was no quorum of members and the Google Groups page did not violate the act or pose any related problems.

3. Staff Presentation

Ms. Varnadore gave an overview presentation on the county's sustainability program. She discussed initiatives supported by the Board of County Commissioners such as the: U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement; Single Stream Recycling; Comprehensive Energy Plan; Green Building/LEED certification; Wind and Solar Text Amendment, Zoning Ordinance; Fleet Fuel

Conservation Plan; Agreement to Capture Methane for energy at the Landfill; Energy efficiency retrofits; Purchase of hybrid and flex-fuel vehicles; Waste to energy study; Clean Energy Center Proposal; Earth Day Proclamation; and Earth Hour Proclamation.

She mentioned examples of recent staff efforts like the Energy Conservation Committee; Energy Dog mascot; Dual flush toilets; Waterless urinals; Replacement of light bulbs; Lights out and computers shut down policies; LEED staff certification; Recycling committees; Bike to work; Commuting; HR Presentations related to energy; and overall implementation of the BOCC strategic plan.

Ms. Varnadore reviewed the county's sustainability framework and three focus areas: practices, policies, and partnerships. She stated that her FY2010 work plan included staff support for the Frederick County Sustainability Commission; facilitation of the internal Sustainable Action Team; and program management, policy development, and outreach/education. Program areas for 2010 include conducting a county/community-wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, establishing a Green Building and Comprehensive Energy Program, and supporting the Green Infrastructure Program developing in Public Works and Planning.

Ms. Roberts stated that the commission may want to weigh in on the growth and expansion of the Office of Environmental Sustainability at some point in the future. She asked staff where similar offices are located in other local governments. Ms. Varnadore stated that many counties have similar offices within the County Manager's Office while others have reorganized traditional environmental or planning departments.

4. Role of the Commission

The commissioners continued their July discussion about their role. Mr. Chafitz said that he saw their role as enhancing and promoting sustainability throughout Frederick County. He added that after a mission statement, they could list focus areas like energy conservation and recycling. Mr. Chafitz also noted that he had attended a candidate's roundtable earlier in the week where participants commented that they feel the county pushes initiatives on the municipalities and that citizens see a lack of harmony between the local governments. This perception should be addressed by the commission.

Ms. Lance said that the Sustainability Commission has an opportunity to pull the county and municipalities together. She said perhaps the commission should invite participation from the municipalities. Lisa Gaver said there was a need for synergy. Mr. Briggs noted that he would be presenting on sustainability and green initiatives, by request, to the Emmitsburg Planning and Zoning Commission on August 24th. The commission agreed by consensus to invite a liaison from each municipality to attend the Sustainability Commission meetings. It was noted that the local governments should progress together on the many important sustainability initiatives ahead. Ms. Varnadore agreed to send an invitation to the individual Mayors and Burgesses on behalf of the Commission.

Ms. Varnadore asked the commissioners to read through the roles they had brainstormed at the July meeting and start grouping them into themes. Several items were added to the list as the group developed the following:

- Advise the county commissioners on specific sustainability issues that will benefit (people, planet, prosperity) of Fred Co
- Be a sounding board to a diverse, cross section of community
- Serve as a conduit between public and Commissioners
- Reaching out to municipalities (liaison)
- Unifying force, serve as a central organizer for groups
- Evaluate and prioritize
- Provide education and communication
- Identify the roadblocks to sustainable practices
- Facilitate, Motivate, Engage
- Develop strategic plan/sustainability plan that includes “actionable” recommendations
- Perform research on resources, grants, best practices
- Evaluate successes in other US counties
- Educate/inform the BOCC on those successes
- Partner with organizations to sponsor, support, endorse programs and events
- Spearhead initiatives based on community need
- Enhance and promote sustainability throughout Frederick County

Ms. Orr and Mr. Briggs volunteered to work with Ms. Varnadore to refine the role and develop a mission statement for the commission to react to at their September meeting.

5. Next Steps

Dr. Palmer asked if everyone had read the note from Karin Tome regarding Wal-Mart and waste management. She wanted to know how we could support Ms. Tome’s idea and how the commission plans to respond to similar citizen requests. Ms. Varnadore pulled the letter up on Google Groups for everyone to read. Ms. Orr said that since the commission is in the forming stages, it would be appropriate to invite Ms. Tome to make public comment, but not a formal presentation at this time. Ms. Fulmer agreed that the commission doesn’t want to get pulled in one direction before they know if they can support and follow through with it. Ms. Lance added that the commission is a brand new group with an official role invited by the Board of County Commissioners. It would be very important for the commission to set some ground rules for how to react to community groups who may want to use the commission as a platform in the future. It was agreed that any citizen or community organization inquiry will be responded to by staff and that staff will invite them to present public comment of 3- 5 minutes during the public comment period of the agenda.

Ms. Varnadore stated that some logical next steps include developing a sustainability vision and guiding principles; discussing development of a sustainability plan; and setting a work plan/goal setting. She said that she would like the group to review bylaws and elect officers in September.

Ms. Orr said that developing a Sustainability Plan was a major process that would likely need its own task force or sub-committee. Mr. Briggs, Ms. Orr and Ms. Fulmer volunteered to start thinking about strategic planning and would bring some ideas back to the full group. There was consensus from the commission that they did not want to meet for six months before they had a mission, vision and work program; rather they preferred holding a half day or full day retreat in

early fall where they could come to consensus on a variety of issues and then move forward. Ms. Varnadore said that she would look into planning a retreat for the commission.

6. Public Comment

Leah Jones of Glory Energy briefed the group on the Choose Green Expo of the Frederick County Builders Association. The event is scheduled for October 16 and 17 and will be held at Frederick Community College. She said that there is a role for the Commission in the Expo. She also mentioned that they would be launching a web site and holding a ribbon cutting for the site at the next Green Drinks event on the 3rd Wednesday of August. The group meets monthly at Quynn's Attic from 5-7pm.

7. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 pm.